

**Brush fire**

A small field was ignited west of Acton after a construction company began burning a large pile of brush in the area. No damage occurred, according to the Fire Department.

**Two-cow pile-up**

A 1984 Camero was totalled and burst into flames after the driver hit and killed two cows on Five Sdrd. west of Trafalgar Rd. early Sunday morning. Halton Hills firefighters were called to the scene to assist Milton's Fire Department, but the fire was out when they arrived.

**False alarm**

Firefighters responded to an Ontario St. company in Georgetown early Monday morning after the alarm was activated. They could not find a problem when they arrived on the scene.

**Bike-car accident**

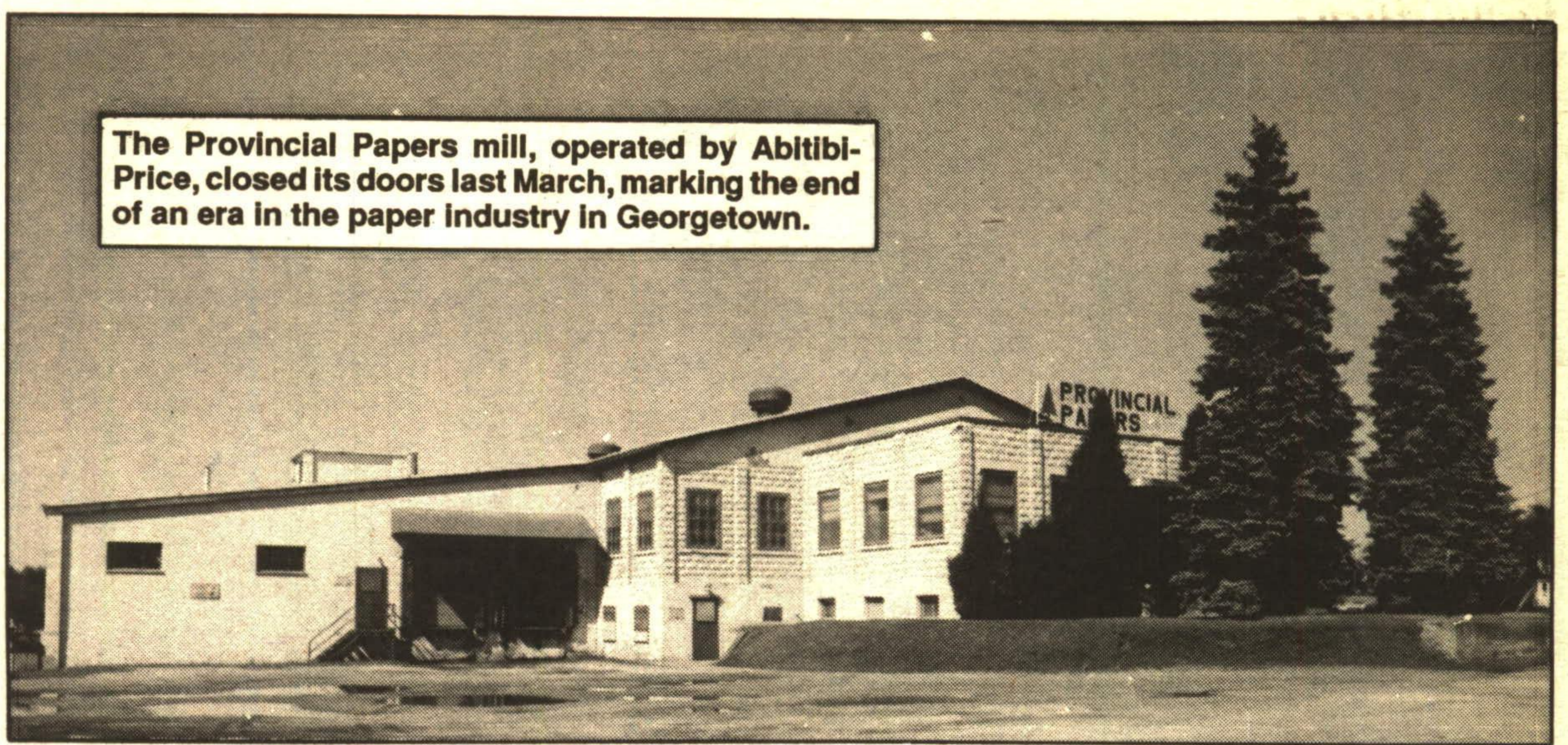
A boy riding a bicycle on Kingham Rd. in Acton received minor injuries on Monday, August 26. The boy came from

**IN BRIEF**

behind a parked car into the path of a car driven by an Acton man and the two collided, police said. The child was taken to Georgetown and District Hospital by his parents and was treated for minimal injuries. Damage to both the car and bicycle was light.

**Car totalled**

One car was totalled and a second was severely damaged in an accident Wednesday afternoon. A 1987 Nissan was going east on Guelph St., turning left onto Maple Ave., when it collided with a 1987 Dodge Aries which was heading west on Guelph St., police said. The driver of the Nissan was charged with making an improper left turn. The Nissan driver received minimal injuries while the driver of the Aries was taken to Georgetown and District Hospital by ambulance with minor injuries, police said.



The Provincial Papers mill, operated by Abitibi-Price, closed its doors last March, marking the end of an era in the paper industry in Georgetown.

**Georgetown loses a tradition**

By JOHN MARK ROWE  
Georgetown and paper.

The place and the product went together as surely as Acton and leather or Limehouse and lime! For 137 years, the town of Georgetown, in the township of Esquesing, County Halton, produced paper of every description. Newsprint, wallpaper, envelopes, magazine paper, white paper, blue paper, glossy paper and the list goes on.

It has all been relegated to history now. Another chapter in Canada's industrial story is finished. On March 31, Provincial Papers, owned by Abitibi-Price, closed its doors for economic reasons.

Provincial Papers were descended from the original paper manufacturers of Georgetown, the Barber Brothers. They got into the paper business quite by chance. William, James, Robert and Joseph Barber purchased the woollen mill operation of George Kennedy in 1837. They prospered on the banks of Silver Creek, a tributary of the Credit.

Finally in 1855, the Barbers decided to consolidate their woollen operations in Streetsville, leaving Georgetown for good. However, in 1854 they were approached by David Forbes from Galt to build a paper mill on the Credit River and rent it to him. He doubtless chose this spot

because the Grand Trunk Railway was under construction nearby. After filling the facility with the latest machinery, he could not meet his obligations. The Barbers were in the paper business.

James Barber was the brother chosen to superintend this operation. By 1857, another structure, equal in size to the first was built. These buildings are captured in pen and ink on the 1858 Tremaine map. The large rambling structure portrayed in the 1877 Atlas more closely resembles the complex which now sits beside the Credit River.

In 1869, the Barber brothers officially divided up their holdings. James' son John Rolf Barber took over the management of the Paper mills. The mills continued to prosper and expanded until all possible sources of power were being used.

Therefore in 1888, Barber constructed an electric power dynamo downriver from his mill. He transported the power over two copper wires, under the railway bridge, the distance of a mile and a half. This is presumed to be the first long-distance industrial use of hydro-electricity in North America.

In 1905, John R. Barber decided to build a separate plant for coated papers, now being used in magazines. He imported a Michi-

gan expert, Edward Fleck, to superintend Canada Coated Papers. This was the second of Georgetown's paper mills.

John R. Barber's many business interests included Barber Ellis in Brantford and another paper mill in Cornwall. After a heart attack, Barber created a limited company in 1911 to run what became known as the upper and lower paper mills. Provincial Papers was created in 1912 to run both operations.

The lower mill, the original Barber Paper Mill, was closed by Provincial Papers on November 15, 1948.

In 1910, Fleck left the employ of the Barber family and formed a limited company with John Willoughby. They opened Georgetown Coated Paper Mill. It was the first local building constructed of reinforced concrete.

They manufactured coated book papers and bristol board. Two famous customers were Laura Secord Chocolates and Saturday Night magazine.

In 1928, they amalgamated with Howard Smith Papers and became Alliance Paper Mills. In 1959, Domtar Fine Papers purchased the operation.

Resident manager Jack Crichton, whose father was also plant manager under Edward Fleck, notified workers in October 1976, that the plant was to close on February 25, 1977.

Georgetown still had a paper industry for another 14 years, but recent changes in consumer paper uses have forced the industry to improve its competitiveness. Georgetown, now merely a branch plant operation, was the victim of these measures. Perhaps Georgetown will become known for another product or for an attraction, like the Dominion Seed House. But the powerful influence of the paper industry which dominated Georgetown for over a century will never again be felt.

The Esquesing Historical Society will meet on Wednesday, Sept. 11, at 7:30 p.m. at Knox Presbyterian Church, Georgetown. The Georgetown Paper mills will be recalled by Jack Crichton, Ted Gorth, Harry Shortill and Steve Emmerson. Everyone is welcome. Please bring your own mug for refreshments.

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